

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC005204
Inspector	Michelle Bacon
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Keys Childcare Ltd
Registered person address	Laganwood House 44 New Forge Lane Belfast BT9 5NW
Responsible individual	Heather Ann Laffin
Registered manager	Tracey Jane Fayers
Date of last inspection	13/03/2014

Inspection date	30/10/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has been no enforcement action since the last inspection.

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	outstanding
Outcomes for children and young people	outstanding
Quality of care	outstanding
Keeping children and young people safe	outstanding
Leadership and management	outstanding

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	outstanding
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Children and young people's needs and views are central to all aspects of how the home operates. They benefit from highly personalised care planning and practice to meet their individual needs. Children and young people make significant progress in relation to their starting points, and the positive impact the home has had on their lives is clearly evidenced. Children and young people recognise the progress they have made since coming to live in the home.

One young person commented, 'I've settled very well...the staff have helped me a lot...it's really nice...the adults are fun to be with and make you feel safe.' Another young person said, 'The staff make good plans and you can have good fun...they take you places... I give it 10 out of 10 for happiness.' All children and young people enjoy a range of activities in the local community and this helps to improve their self-esteem and social skills.

Staff have an excellent understanding of the children and young people they care for. They have high aspirations for all children and young people and celebrate all their achievements. A key strength of the home is education as all children and young people have excellent attendance and participation. A placing social worker commented, 'X had been excluded from all the schools here...education has come on

leaps and bounds and their behaviour has as well.'

The home is effectively and efficiently managed. The manager provides strong leadership, and is committed to providing a high standard of care. Managers are ambitious and energetic, and their commitment to continuous improvement maximises the progress that children and young people make. There are no breeches in regulation. Two recommendations are made which relate to administrative shortfalls, and do not impact on the welfare and safety of children and young people.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This service, operated by a private organisation, provides integrated packages of care, therapy and education for a maximum of six children with reactive attachment difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/03/2014	Interim	good progress
07/11/2013	Full	outstanding
07/01/2013	Interim	good progress
07/08/2012	Full	good

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure investigations into allegations or suspicions of harm are handled fairly, quickly, and consistently in a way that provides effective protection for the child, and at the same time supports the person who is subject of the allegation (NMS 20.8)
- ensure entries in records are legible, clearly expressed, non-stigmatising and distinguish as far as possible between fact, opinion and third party information. (NMS 22.4)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

Children and young people make excellent progress to develop emotional resilience and improve their understanding of their backgrounds. They benefit from high levels of support that allows them to improve educationally and socially. In addition they develop very positive attachments to staff, enabling them to thrive and grow in a nurturing environment. Alongside this, children and young people benefit from weekly in-house therapeutic support that promotes their psychological well-being. One young person commented, 'It's helped me a lot living here both mentally and physically...I go to therapy, I don't like going but it helps me.' This enables children and young people to make sense of their past issues and move forward to develop a positive self-view.

Children and young people have exceptionally good attendance at school. They are making significant progress from their starting point as many of them struggled to access full-time education prior to coming to live in this home. One placing social worker commented, 'X has made excellent progress...they have completely calmed down and engaging in therapy and school. We are now able to consider foster care which was out of the question a year ago.' There is an 'achievements wall' in the home where children and young people proudly display their certificates and awards. This improves their confidence and encourages them to continue to make academic progress.

Children and young people are very healthy and benefit from healthy lifestyles. They enjoy a healthy diet choosing to eat fruit and vegetables. One young person told the inspector how they had been supported to lose weight. Children and young people also enjoy lots of physical activities, such as swimming, rock climbing, running and Martial Arts.

Children and young people make a positive contribution to their home and wider community. For example, they are regularly involved in menu planning and shopping. One young person said, 'We take ideas to the residents' meetings and all decide together.' All children and young people take part in age appropriate peer activities, such as scouts, cubs and St John Ambulance. This helps to improve their confidence and social skills.

Children and young people benefit from appropriate contact with their families. Staff ensure that contact arrangements promote the welfare and safety of children and young people well.

Quality of care **outstanding**

Children and young people thrive in a stable and a highly child-focused environment which provides them with long term stability. They enjoy positive and constructive relationships with staff and each other most of the time. Staff have consistently high aspirations for all children and young people in the home. One young person said, 'Staff are friendly.' Another young person commented that they 'love' spending time with their key worker because they have similar interests. A placing social worker said, 'This is an excellent home- I've worked with a lot of homes and it's far and above one of the best.'

Children and young people's psychological and emotional health needs are extremely well met. Staff demonstrate high levels of emotional warmth in their interactions with the children and young people. They meet regularly with a psychologist who attends team meetings. This allows them to explore and seek ways to effectively manage some of the extreme challenges children and young people's behaviour presents. This means staff have an excellent understanding of children and young people's emotional and psychological needs. One placing social worker said, 'Staff are on the ball with their knowledge of the young people.' Another said, 'Staff 'get' the young people...they deal with them therapeutically.'

Staff place the well-being of children and young people at the centre of their practice. Care planning and day to day practice recognises each child and young person as an individual with differing needs and interests. For example, all the children and young people have different hobbies and interests which staff actively promote. Staff also engage the children and young people in regular group therapy in order to develop team building and social inclusion. This helps to build friendships and improve relationships within the group.

The home provides a stimulating and nurturing environment that supports children and young people's development. For example, staff have been successful in challenging barriers to children and young people's participation in their education. They transport them to and from school, and where appropriate provide support in school. Staff have established strong links with all teaching staff through daily contact. As a result, children and young people have made significant progress in their attendance and achievements.

Children and young people live in a home that is maintained to a high standard. Children and young people's bedrooms are personalised and furnished to their own style and needs. Children and young people's photographs, certificates and artwork are displayed around the home. This gives them a strong sense of belonging and makes them feel valued.

Keeping children and young people safe **outstanding**

Children and young people say they feel safe and protected from harm. They say they have someone they can talk to if they have any worries or concerns. Staff are well trained in safeguarding matters, and fully understand their role and responsibilities in protecting the welfare and safety of all children and young people.

Staff work effectively with safeguarding agencies to promote children and young people's safety. Records confirm that they take prompt action and are meticulous in referring issues and taking advice. A recent safeguarding concern was referred to all the appropriate agencies and was thoroughly investigated. However, there was a delay in the investigation being formally concluded. This delay did not impact on the welfare and safety of children and young people.

Prior to this placement many of the children and young people frequently went missing and engaged in criminal behaviours. Children and young people going missing from this home is rare. However, there are clear and effective procedures in place to promote their safe return if they do go missing. There are strong links with the police who are very positive about the home, commenting, 'This is one of the better homes.'

Children and young people confirm staff address any issues of bullying well. There is a strong focus on bullying at the house meetings to raise awareness, and ensure children and young people are acutely aware of its impact. Detailed risk assessments are in place to ensure children and young people's welfare and safety in relation to all activities.

Staff apply positive behaviour management strategies to enable children and young people to manage their anger and frustrations. At times of crisis where children and young people place themselves and others at risk of harm, staff use physical intervention. Physical interventions are closely monitored by the manager and reviewed for their effectiveness. There is a strong emphasis on promoting positive behaviour with incentives, rewards and praise.

Children and young people live in a physically safe environment. Regular health and safety checks ensure the home is free from potential hazards. Staff carry out regular fire drills with children and young people to ensure they know how to exit the building safely. The recruitment and vetting of staff is robust to make sure children and young people are only cared for by suitable people.

Leadership and management

outstanding

The highly effective Registered Manager has been in post since July 2006. She holds a level 4 qualification in working with children and young people and the Registered Manager award. The manager and staff are very committed to providing high quality childcare that consistently improves outcomes for children and young people. The home can clearly demonstrate the impact and value it has had on children and young

people's lives, and how their life chances have improved over time.

The home meets the aims and objectives of its Statement of Purpose. This has recently been updated to ensure compliance with the revised regulations. This ensures parents and stakeholders are clear about what services and facilities the home provides.

The manager consistently communicates high expectations to staff about sustaining improvement. She seeks feedback in the form of questionnaires from parents and professionals to gain their views to further develop and improve the home. One professional said, 'I have always found the staff very welcoming, caring and committed to the children...it is always a pleasure to visit such a well run establishment.'

Children and young people are well cared for by staff who are well trained and supported in their role. Staff have access to high quality supervision and have their performance annually appraised. A recent improvement in the home is children and young people's contribution to the appraisals. Staff confirm they are well supported by each other and the management team. One member of staff commented, 'We are very supportive of each other, it's nice because it isn't always an easy job.'

The manager has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. She uses the quality assurance systems in place to improve practice, and to ensure that outcomes for children and young people continue to improve. In addition, she conducts monthly file audits to ensure they are up-to-date. No areas for improvement were identified at the last inspection.

Overall the records are clear, stored securely and contribute to an understanding of the child's life, experiences and plans for the future. However, this is slightly undermined by the fact that some records are hand written and difficult to read at times. This does not impact on the quality of care children and young people receive.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.